

KENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

QUARTERLY REVIEW

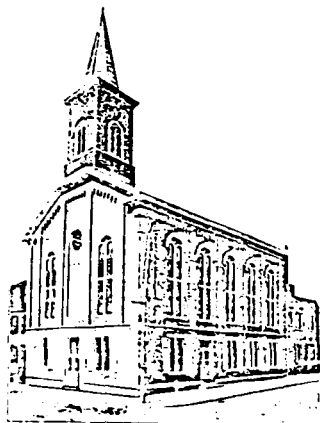
SUMMER 1985

THE CHURCHES OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST (Kenton Co.)

The history of American Protestantism emerges when people were isolated by poor transportation, geographical barriers, sparse population, diversity of backgrounds, and language differences. Along with such divisions, immigrants were fearful of ecclesiastical control due to recent experiences in the Old Country with state controls by newer Protestant officials. Advocates for continuing congregational freedom, in addition, argued that the true unity of God's Church will come on Judgement Day. It should be Divine-made. Besides, religion is personal not social or collective, they argued. However, the amazing multiplication of congregations and denominations was reduced or streamlined through consolidation. From frontier beginnings to the present, congregations were affected by trends relating to historical factors such as the sectionalism during the Civil War period, the later Social Gospel preaching, unitarianism, ecumenism, and internationalism. Many Germans joined Methodist, presbyterian, or congregational churches organized along Anglo lines; but most followed the Lutheran, Evangelical, or Reformed branches of the Continental Reformation. In various combinations, many or most such churches eventually joined multi-denominational groupings which might be considered having coherent doctrine, such as the United Church of Christ.

St Paul's United Church of Christ

In the Spring of 1847 a small number of Protestant Germans came together in Covington for the purpose of organizing a congregation and building a church. The name given was St Paul's Congregation of the Evangelical Protestant Church, which in 1934 was changed to St Paul's Evangelical and Reformed Church, and which in 1955 became St Paul's United Church of Christ. According to the Cashbook original trustees elected May 1, 1847 were the following: Carl Wolf; Valentine Hagen; Henry Uhlhorn; with Ludwig Kattan, Recording Secretary and Carl Geisbauer, Treasurer. First payment on the lot at 11th and Banklick of \$150.00 indicated transfer of ownership. A frame church was built in the Summer of 1847. On August 29 the first service was held. On September 3rd payment was made for fire insurance. Dedication was November 1st. The Reverend Henry Christian Dolle was elected Pastor.



St. Paul Evangelical Church

After the first floor of the present brick church was erected in 1860-61 along side of the wooden structure, it was used as a school and pastor-teacher's residence. In 1867 the congregation completed the second floor. The cornerstone was laid July 21 1868. With the attendance of thousands swelled by lodges from the American Protestant Association including prominent clergy from Cincinnati who had been greeted at the Suspension Bridge by Kentuckians, Reverend O. Heinisch conducted dedication ceremonies April 26, 1868. Despite money saving efforts cost of the church ran to \$18-19, 000.00.

Reflective of the lack of education and the general social isolation in the West, St Paul's had difficulty keeping good pastors, and avoiding mediocre ones. Election of pastors caused division in the congregation, as did doctrine, schooling, language, and money. Members split from St Paul's in 1862 because they wanted the type of German education then provided only by the local Catholic Parochial school. The more forceful organization of the Reformed Church also appealed. And then St Paul's members were not adverse to beer drinking because leading members were brewers who also provided financial and political leadership in the congregation as well as the city: Mr. Geisbauer of the Covington Brewery, Mr. Deglow of the Bavarian Brewery, Mr. Lang of the Lewisburg Brewery, Mr. Knoll of the Lewisburg Brewery, Mr. Brenner of the Brenner Brewery, and Mr. Reidlin of the Bavarian Brewery.

In 1875 the church tower with clock and bell was built. The clock cost \$1, 075.00. At the same time, the roof was covered with slate. The Women's Club sponsored some fresco painting. At the 25th anniversary new chandeliers, a new pulpit, alter covers, and stained glass windows (with donors' names) were installed. In 1899 a parsonage was purchased at 1121 Banklick so that the present Pastor's quarters could be used for Sunday School. In 1897 at the 50th anniversary, the church was re-decorated; and the membership stood at 216 families. In 1898 Mr. Frederick Brenner, heir of John and Caroline Brenner, presented the church with \$2, 000.00 for a new organ; the old organ was donated to St John's Congregation in West Covington.

In 1900 renovation of the church cost \$2, 406.35, including replacing the stoves with a new furnace. In 1913 gas lights were replaced with electric lights. In 1919 the parsonage was sold for \$3, 000.00. The tower had become unsafe, and therefore was dismantled and rebuilt, but without re-installing the clock. The organ was relocated from the gallery to the back of the pulpit. New pews were added. Total cost was \$21, 027.42. In 1928 another renovation included the following: three manuel Teller-Kent Pipe Organ with chimes and harp, two new choir rooms, a new choir loft, steam heat, new carpeting, and church tower repaired. Also an improvement of singular distinction was the topping of the spire with a copper hand with index finger pointing skyward.

In 1947 for the 100th anniversary the church tower was renovated with brick veneer. The church and Sunday School was repainted. The kitchen was re-equipped. Two large pictures of Christ knocking at the Door and of the Good Shephard were presented by Mr. Howard Jetter. In 1955 24 pews were added. Electric candelabras, flower stands, large flower vases, and new carpeting was installed.

St. Paul
United Church of Christ
Lookout Heights
Fort Wright, Kentucky 41011
Founded in 1847



In that year St Paul's along with other churches of the Synod joined the United Church of Christ. But in 1957 a building fund was initiated signifying another big change--a relocation to the suburbs. Ground was broken May 21, 1967 at 429 Ft Henry Drive, Ft Wright, Kentucky (the present address). The congregation officially relocated. The old brick church at 11th and Banklick is presently owned by a local Black Minister. The hand pointing to heaven remains.

Grace United Church of Christ

On April 18, 1862 at the home of Mr. and Mrs. H. W. Schleutker, a congregation was formed with 18 charter members: Mr. and Mrs. John Frederick Schleutker, Pike and Craig; Mr. (eldest son) and Mrs. H. W. Schleutker, wholesale grocer; G. H. Schleutker, retail grocer, 9th and Pike; Mr. and Mrs. H. Theising, Willard street opposite present day church; Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Timmermann, Robbins Street near present day John G. Carlisle; Mr. and Mrs. H. H. Uhlhorn; Mr. and Mrs. D. Stadtlaender, 12th and Bullock; Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Schild; Mr. C. Mieth, tailor who lived on Kipp and Lee; and Mrs. M. Braun, also 12th and Bullock. The "pumpernickle church" was established partly because John Schleutker, a baker of pumpernickle bread, wanted a German education for his children. Since the only school to his liking was then run by Catholics, he gathered together like minded people. These Protestants also had various objections to doctrinal and leadership practice, and to the influence of the local brewers at St Paul's. At the first meeting the Reverend Hermann Rust, D. D., Pastor of the first Reformed Church at the northwest corner of Elm and 15th Streets in Cincinnati, rendered valuable leadership. A committee consisting of H. W. Schleutker and H. H. Uhlhorn was named to locate a building site. Mr. Thiesing and Mr. Uhlhorn were appointed to locate temporary quarters. The first services were scheduled for Easter Sunday, April 27, 1862 at 10:00 AM.

At the second meeting on April 23, 1862 the committee reported a suitable site at the northwest corner of Willard and Lockwood which would cost \$18.00 a running foot for the 50 feet by 90 feet lot. The members instructed the committee to close the deal. This site was in a newer suburb of Covington. But the large estate nearby which belonged to flour mill owner A. L. Greer still had not been subdivided. In the 1880's the fine cluster of Italianate homes that exist today were built on the north side of the intersections of 9th, Holman, Greer, and Pike Streets.

At the third meeting on April 27, 1862 it was voted to join the Miami Classis of the Ohio Synod of the Reformed Church of the United States and to take the name (in German) The Evangelical Reformed Church at Covington, Kentucky. Then the meeting place was changed to the Old Engine House at Pike and Washington.

The new church was built with walls 21 inches thick. The first floor was used for school rooms and a parsonage, the second floor for services. The final cost of \$7, 544.31 was for lot, church, and organ. The cornerstone for this structure of rather modest design was laid June 13, 1863. Dedication ceremonies took place April 6, 1893.

School opened for members at 25 cents per month and 35 cents for non-members; but only children of Germans could attend. In 1864 the Ladies Aid Society was organized. Income for the year was \$862.84. In 1868 the Pastor's salary was set at \$500.00; membership had grown to 230 members. In 1873 foot wipers were placed at the bottom of the entrance, and also posts so that the horses could be tied up. In a meeting open only to men in 1874, it was decided to join the German Classis only if the other German churches did likewise. In 1875 each member was asked to pay \$10.00 in order to help retire the debt. In 1873 the organist did not have to resign despite reports that he had fathered a child out of wedlock to a woman that he had recently married. But the organist also had loaned the church \$3, 511.98 of his own money. In 1889 the parsonage behind the church was built for \$2, 500.00. In 1896 the addition of a bell tower and alteration of the front facade radically changed the outer appearance of the church. A new hot air furnace was installed. These improvements were paid for partly by borrowing \$4, 000.00 from John Schleutke. In 1908 a new pipe organ was installed at a cost of \$2, 439.00 with money borrowed from the church bauverein. In 1901 the pastor reported 330 members. In 1915 lavatories were moved inside. In 1918 in response to anti-German sentiment, the name was changed from the German to the English "German Evangelical Reformed Church." But later in that year it was renamed the Grace Reformed Church and services ceased to be in German altogether. In 1961 the Congregation took the title, "Grace United Church of Christ."

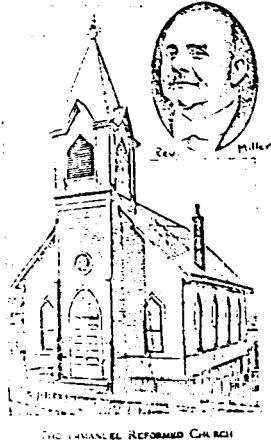
In 1922 Reverend Miller (from the Miller Paint Co. family) was presented with a Ford Sedan by both the Bromley and Covington congregations. Despite his recent retirement, he substituted for his successor, Reverend Johansmann when the latter served as chaplain in both World War II and in the Korean War. In 1956 the combined pastorate of Immanuel in Bromley and Grace in Covington was discontinued. In 1961 the Grace Church voted not to relocate to the suburbs. In 1965 Reverend Karl Vercoouteran became Pastor, and a house at 7th and Craig was purchased for his residence. He delved into local neighborhood history and German Church history before he transferred. The congregation has continued to hold services attended both by neighborhood people and by loyal members from the suburbs.

Immanuel United Church of Christ

From 1880 for a decade or more Reformed church people settled in the vicinity of Bromley. The town then known as Mulinsville was unincorporated but had a post office. There were two church groups: the Campbellites and the Reformed. Both held services in the same church, the latter in the afternoon. Reverend Kuhl from the Reformed Church in Covington and Reverend Schmitt from the Evangelical Church on Banklick alternated. The children attended Sunday school at those two churches and at Scott's Chapel, lower River Road below Bromley.

On March 11, 1894 the Reformed Protestants decided to build. Reverend Kuhl was elected President. The group numbered thirty: the Reinhart family, 16; the Beil family, 6; Schultheis, 2; Eggloff, 2; Rauh, 2; Emma Armentrout; and Barbara Schirmer. Henry Schultheis was Secretary; Fred Reinhart and Lelwig Beil, Elders; Georg Eggloff and Louis Beil, Deacons; Carl Theirs, Fred Reinhart, jr., and George Reinhart, Trustees. The Trustees were charged with finding a suitable location, and the northeast corner of Boone and Harris was chosen. The site was purchased and plans were drawn up under the direction of a building committee: Wm. Twachtman, Julius Beil, Abraham Maegly, Henry Schultheis, and August Ruschke. Local farmers donated stone for the foundation; Henry Schultheis and Mr. Huggins laid up the walls for the foundation. Building costs were kept at \$3, 000.00. On July 15, 1894 the cornerstone was laid. On September 30, 1894 the church was dedicated. The Germans saw fit to make the language of the Old Country the spoken and written word in the Sunday School. A ladies Aid Society was organized. The Church Constitution was adopted. Membership numbered 55.

St Mark's United Church of Christ



On September 26, 1897 Reverend Kuhl died. He was succeeded by John H. Rettig who oversaw the installation of a heating system and a Reed Organ, and the building of a kitchen addition. Under the next pastor, Reverend Charles M. Schaaf, D. D., membership had increased to 96. The Church purchased a piano. But in 1916 Reverend Schaaf resigned and Mr. William E. Miller, a lay member from Salem Reformed Church in Cincinnati, was recruited and ordained April, 1916. In July, 1918 it was deemed advisable to conduct all services in English, and the name of the Congregation was changed to (English) Immanuel Reformed Church of Bromley, Kentucky. A new constitution was drawn up in English. An American flag was raised during the war, as was a Service Flag with a star representing every boy in the Service. Natural gas was installed for the first time at the end of the War.

In the Fall of 1920 a choir of 20 members was organized. In 1922 two lots adjoining the church on Boone Street were purchased for \$1, 320.00. Electric light were installed. Services were rescheduled to morning hours. In 1925 the Lecture Room was enlarged. In 1927 men of the congregation dug out a basement under the auditorium, and restrooms were installed and the furnace replaced. In 1928 a new piano was purchased. In 1932 a chimney was installed on the west side of the church.

The merger of the Evangelical and the Reformed Churches in 1934 caused another name change, to Immanuel Evangelical and Reformed Church. In 1936 Mr. Clayton Rammler became the first boy to enter the ministry from the congregation. In 1943 he became a Chaplain in the Navy. In 1963 he was named President of the Southwest Ohio Assoc. The flood of 1937 turned the church into a furniture storage facility for the neighborhood. In 1938 a new church organ was purchased, and in 1940 Reverend Miller's Sister presented the church with organ chimes. Membership stood at 169. Reverend Miller retired in 1941 after 25 years but was elected Pastor Emeritus. And he had to substitute for his successor, Reverend Urban Johanson of Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, when the latter served as Air Force Chaplain during the World War and during the Korean War.

In 1958 a cornerstone was laid for a new church which cost \$51, 000.00. The contents in the cornerstone from the old church were the following: A Bible in German; a hymn book in German; a Heidelberg Catechism in German; the Reformed Church magazine Kirchen Zeitung; the Cincinnati Enquirer (July 12, 1894); The Kentucky Post (July 10, 1894); the Cincinnati Times Star (July 11, 1894); the Kentucky Demokrat (July 8, 1884); a German newspaper Tagliches Cincinnati Volkblatt (July 8, 1894); A German Church School paper, Lamm-Hirte; a German magazine, Die Monatschrift fur Alte und Junge; a list of membership; and again, the front pages of the Kentucky Post, Enquirer, and Times Star; and a church program. The last service was held in the old church on December 13, 1959 by Reverend Rammler prior to demolition by a member of the congregation. First services in the new church were held the same day. The neighborhood has been supportive, and the older members loyal enough, to keep the congregation active to this day.

In February, 1907 the Extension Board of the Home Missions of the Indiana District of the Evangelical Synod of North America sent the Reverend William Echelmeier to Latonia with the purpose of canvassing for a new church. In March, 1907 respondents began holding services in Bird's Hall in Main Street (now Winston) in Latonia. On September 25, 1907, eight women formed Ladies Aid with Mrs. Lizzie Smith as President. The Ladies formally moved that they and Pastor Echelmeier select a building site. They chose the present location at 38th and Park. First payment on the lot was made November 8, 1907. And the title "St Mark's Evangelical Church of Latonia, Kentucky" was chosen.

On January, 1908 the first Church Council was organized: William Echelmeier, Pastor; Henry Luzader, President; Henry Brand, Vice-President; William Young, Secretary; Henry Stichling, Treasurer; and G. T. Schickner and George Walje, Trustees. A Constitution was adopted. On February, 1908 the Council elected to build a church and then settled on George W. Schofield as architect, and J. D. Yelton as builder.

On August, 1908 the cornerstone was laid by Reverend Echelmeier, assisted by Reverend H. C. Runyon of Latonia Christian, Reverend F. Hohman, Pleasant Ridge, Ohio, and Reverend Doctor J. Pister, President of the Evangelical Church of North America and well known advocate for Protestant unity at the turn of the century and a prominent Pastor in Cincinnati. Placed in the cornerstone were the following: a copy of the Constitution of the Evangelical Synod; a Yearbook of the Evangelical Church; a Hymnal; a New Testament copy; The Friedensblatt; The Messenger of Peace; The Evangelical; a copy of the Church Constitution; and a list of original membership. On July 1914 Reverend John C. Klingenberg was appointed Pastor. The Pastor's salary was listed at \$650.00. The Organist was paid \$1.50 per week. A parsonage was built for \$2, 875.00. On October, 1918 Reverend A. C. Roth replaced Reverend Klingenberg. On September, 1919 Reverend Frank C. Scholl became Pastor--a term of service which lasted approximately 50 years. In 1924 the Sunday School was enlarged and the church renovated for \$22, 000.00. In 1941 another renovation and debt retirement cost \$7, 000.00.



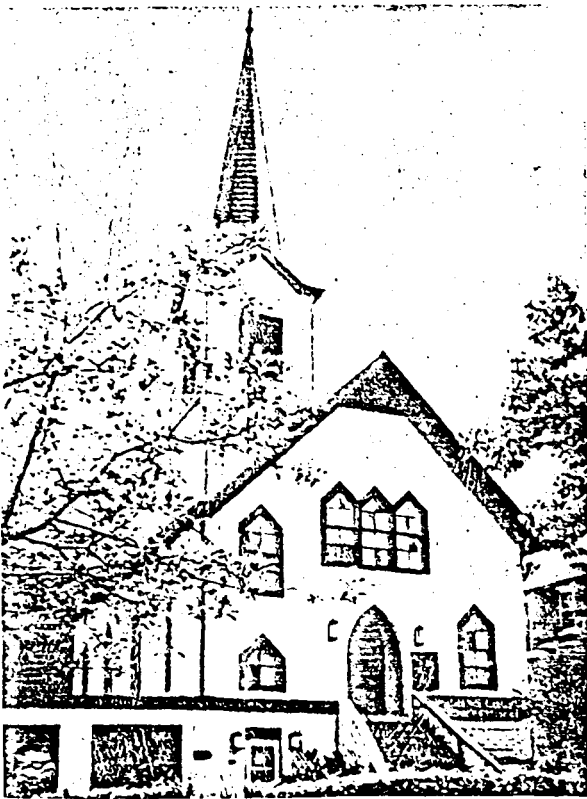
In 1949 the Church bought four and one-half acres in Winston Park for use as a playground and ballfield. In the mid-fifties the congregation had to weigh the need for expansion against the risk of heavy financial commitment. A new version of expansion and renovation ended up costing \$160, 000.00. And a new parking lot cost \$8, 500.00. In 1968 Reverend Frank Scholl retired after 50 years. Reverend Gene Wetzel was Pastor, 1970-1978. In 1979 Reverend George Muzny from Texas became Pastor. Located not in the "Inner City" like St Paul's, but rather in a newer suburb (that once was self governing), St Mark's has benefitted from the relative stability and loyalty, even with the inevitable turnover, of Latonia residents.

St John's Evangelical Congregational Church

For want of public transportation and Sunday School close by for their children, German Protestants on the western edge of Covington in 1892 organized a new congregation with the help of the Reverend Gilbert Schmitt from St Paul's Evangelical Church, 11th and Banklick, Covington. By 1921, when death had ended his Pastorate at St John's, German had been supplanted by English and his own son, a young minister, had done some of the first preaching in English during World War I.

While the church for the new congregation was being built, services were held on Main Street (now Parkway) either in the Methodist Church or in West Covington's (then known as Economy) Historic Romanowitz Hall. Ground was broken October 2, 1892; the first service was held December 26, 1892. Charter members were the following: Christian Schwindt, George Bluemlein, August Miller, August Barkhau, Conrad Dietz, Andrea Winter, Henry Bremenkamp, Philip Zoble, Peter Freimuth, Chris Barkhau, Fred Barkhau, Fred Steinhoff, Henry Hischemiller, Adolf Hugentobler, Gottlieb Moser, and William Kurtuum. In 1893 the first choir was organized. On January 15, Christian Dietz was the first infant christened. On May 14 occurred the first Confirmation ceremony. On April 16 the church was dedicated as St John's Evangelical Protestant Church. In 1900 the old pipe organ from St Paul's in Covington was transferred to the balcony of St John's.

In 1911 lightning set fire to the steeple but the building was saved. On July 7, 1915 a tornado damaged the building. In 1923 the church building was elevated and a ground level constructed at a cost of \$8,000.00.



Although originally associated with St Paul's on Banklick Street in Covington, St John's has to this date upheld an independent congregational viewpoint. Ministers are allowed to interpret Scripture free from outside control. Members must be tolerant of his viewpoint, but he may not force his outlook on the congregation. By affiliating with the Congregational Christian Churches in 1923, St. John's hoped to make easier the recruiting of non-denominational pastors--but without abandoning autonomy. And in 1961 St John's maintained such independence by voting not to follow sister congregations into the United Church of Christ. However, the Congregation has in recent years suffered some infighting which its retired pastor has lamented as unbecoming a non-denominational church.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

History of Congregations found in anniversary booklets of various churches. Vertical Files. Local History Section. Kenton County Public Library, 5th and Scott Streets, Covington.

Historical Background of German Churches in and around Cincinnati. by Dr. Marvin P. Davis. Compiled 1959-1968. Collection at the Cincinnati Historical Society, Eden Park. Note the conflict between the pastors of the "free" Protestant congregations and the pastors of unitarian bent. In later 1800's Lutherans joined with Calvinist Reformed in Evangelical synod. However, many "free" congregations remained.

75th Anniversary of St John's Congregational Church. by Reverend Walter Haupt. Covington, Kentucky, 1967. Although this congregation did not join the United Church of Christ or officially submit to ecclesiastical control in other instances, it has lost some of its non-denominational tone in recent in-house conflicts.

The German Churches of Covington. A History of the German People and Churches of Covington, Kentucky. by Karl J. Vercouteren. Covington, Kentucky, 1977. While Pastor of Grace United Church of Christ, Reverend Vercouteren researched the "Roots" of the German Churches and people of Covington. He notes the following: 1) before the Germans had their own churches early German immigrants sometimes attended Presbyterian services. German Methodists first tried to organize; 2) "It is estimated that 200 Germans per day were arriving in Cincinnati in 1840. That is when German Churches began organizing"; 3) Immanuel Methodist Episcopal Church was affiliated with the German Methodist Church in Newport when it first located in the 700 block of Craig in the late 1840's then in 1869 to 10th and Russell, then in 1950 to Lakeside Park; 4) German Lutheran and Evangelical Protestants were first aided when Pastor Goebel came from Cincinnati in mid 40's to preach in the City school house. Then in 1847 St Paul's was organized with Lutheran and Calvinist ideals espoused by Goebel in Evangelical manner.

The United Church of Christ, Its Origins, Organization, and Role in the World Today. by Douglas Horton. New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1962. Review of Church's history. See p.17 f.: 1) Evangelical Union of Calvinist and Lutheran Protestants first made in Prussia. Evangelical Synod formed in this Country in 1877; 2) joining of Evangelicals with Reformed in 1934; 3) joining of Christians with Congregationalists in 1931; 4) joining of the Congregational Christian and the Evangelical and Reformed Churches into one body, The United Church of Christ, officially June 25, 1957, with a Pastor once from Norwood, Ohio as its first President.

(Pieces on the five churches originally written by Mr. Jim Kiger; however, final version responsibility of Publication Committee)



Ulrich Zwingli

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SUMMER-FALL MEETINGS

Saturday, September 8, 1:00 PM, Kenton County Public Library, Covington--we will have our annual election of officers--President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Director. Nominations may be made up to the time of voting. These offices are open to all members. All members more than welcome to nominate candidates. Following the election we will preview and prepare for the Regional Conference of the Historical Confederation of Kentucky--"Rivers and Railroads." Anyone interested in local history and anyone interested in meeting people from local historical and genealogical organizations are invited to sign up for participation either as helpers or as displayers of local history.

Saturday, October 5, 8:00 PM, Carnegie Arts Center, Covington--Our program for this month will be the Regional Conference of the Historical Confederation of Kentucky entitled "Rivers and Railroads." The Conference is scheduled to last all Morning in the Carnegie Arts Center followed by lunch and tours in the Northern Kentucky area. All people with interest in local history and genealogy are welcome to participate, either in the displays and discussions or as helpers with the Conference events.

Saturday, November 2, 1:00 PM, Kenton County Public Library, Covington--Walter Langsam, Jr., Covington's Architectural Surveyor, will give a slide show featuring the recent restoration of the Governor's Mansion in Frankfort, Kentucky. The Mansion was originally designed by the Weber Brothers, Northern Kentucky Architects, who also designed Holmes and Newport High Schools. They lived in Ft Thomas, and their descendents still live in Northern Kentucky.

Look for our annual Christmas Party in December

PUBLICATIONS

Kenton County Cemetery Book, listings taken from headstones of cemeteries in the County. \$22.00 plus \$2.00 for mailing.

Westside Covington Walking Tour, a guide for a walking tour of Mainstrasse. \$2.50 plus \$1.00 for mailing.

From Gentlemen Farmers to City Folk, the story of the development of Wallace Woods in Covington. \$2.50 plus \$1.00 for mailing.

1860 Census Index for Kenton County, Kentucky, (160 pp.). It is divided into the "County District" and "Covington Wards," and listings include the following: name, age, birthplace, occupation, and page and line in the original Census proper. A real convenience for genealogists and other researchers. \$12.50 plus \$2.00 for mailing.

*Take two years membership at one time for \$10.00 or more and get either Westside Walking Tour or From Gentlemen Farmers to City Folk for free.

MEMBERSHIP DUES(Send to Treasurer, Kenton County Historical Society, P. O. Box 641, Covington, Kentucky 41012)

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OFFICER NOMINATION FORM (Send your list of nominees to the following: Secretary, Kenton County Historical Society, P. O. Box 641, Covington, Kentucky 41012)

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Vice-President: _____
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Director: _____